UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

Mind, Body, Spirit: Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness
UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

May June 2021, Volume 6, Issue 3

REFLECTION:

“And the wind upon its way whispered the boughs of May, and touched the nodding peony flowers to bid them waken.” Siegfried Sassoon This spring the annual flowers - azaleas, lilacs, iris, and peonies - seem to have an abundance of exuberant blooms in their welcome of the warmer days. An emergent hope is also evident as more and more people are getting vaccinated, and friends and families are gradually regaining comfort in visiting face-to-face.

COVID UPDATE

The CDC has released updated guidance for people who are fully vaccinated. People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen).±

A color-coded graphic pdf "Choosing Safer Activities" is available to download that illustrates levels of safety (green, yellow, and red) for various activities for unvaccinated and vaccinated persons. NOTE: Officials still caution that crowded outdoor settings pose risks and urge everyone — both the vaccinated and unvaccinated — to wear masks when attending sporting events, live performances and parades.

Links to other updated guidelines include:

- visitation to nursing homes and post-acute care settings
- indoor visiting with other vaccinated individuals travel

Being fully vaccinated brings with it a sense of relief, hope, and new possibilities. But easing back into "normal" activities may also bring some unexpected anxiety and stress. An article in Psychology Today, 5 Tips for Easing Into Post-COVID Life When the Time Comes offers several points to facilitate this transitional time.

HEALTH PROGRAMMING AND OBSERVATION DATES:

May:

Mental Health Month

The National Alliance on Mental Illness

National High Blood Pressure Education

(NAMI) is using the message, “You Are Not Alone” in their resources for 2021’s Mental Health Month. Many NAMI Affiliates offer peer-led programs that provide free education, skills training and support.

Mental Health Sunday: The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network invites you to highlight mental health on the third Sunday in May or any Sunday that suits your schedule. Sample liturgies, sermons, bulletin inserts, and a worship resource, *Radical Belonging: A Mental Health Sunday Resource for All* are available. UCC Mental Health Network Congregational Toolkits are also available.

Asthma and Allergies Awareness Month

This time of year is a peak season for people with asthma and allergies. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) highlights data in a factsheet; it notes that asthma is the leading chronic illness in children. The theme of this year's awareness month is to dispel myths and help people understand asthma and allergies. An AAFA research report finds that Black, Hispanic and Indigenous people in the U.S. are disproportionately burdened by asthma. You can find a 31-day plan for action to raise awareness of asthma and allergies.

Month

The National Institute of Health’s National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has a large selection of patient education pamphlets which can be ordered (selections will be mailed to you).

The American Heart Association recommends including home blood pressure readings as part of office screening for hypertension.

The CDC offers Shareable Handouts and Tools for recording blood pressure readings at home and the correct technique for measuring blood pressure. The CDC has also developed a program called The WISEWOMAN (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for WOMen Across the Nation) program. It was created to help women understand and reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke by providing services to promote lasting heart-healthy lifestyles. The program provides funding to 21 states and 3 tribal organizations throughout the U.S.

May is National Nurses Month

For many years we celebrated National Nurses Day or National Nurses Week. The World Health Organization and others designated the year 2020 as "The Year of the Nurse and Midwife” to

recognize the pivotal role of nurses in their response to the many events impacting the country and the world. The American Nurses Association, wanting to recognize the extent and impact of nurses' response to the pandemic, continued the observance through 2021. A blog about National Nurses Week (May 6-May 12) shares historical perspectives, information about Nurses Week 2021, and links to articles on self-care and nurse mental wellness.

Take this opportunity to say "thank you" to Faith Community Nurses who have responded during the pandemic in many different ways:

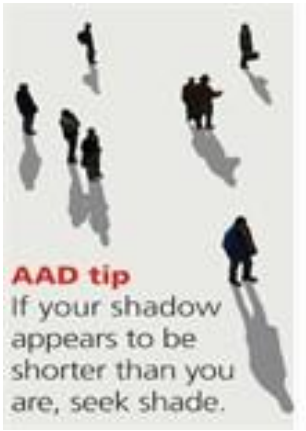
- Developing educational webinars and website materials related to COVID-19
- Maintaining phone, electronic, and visitation connections to parishioners
- Clarifying infectious disease prevention information
- Serving on task forces for implementing CDC recommendations
- Adapting care delivery for members of their faith communities
- Providing spiritual support and bereavement care
- Participating in wider community assistance responses
- Promoting vaccination
- Volunteering in immunization clinics

June:

National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month

The warmer season with increased sun exposure is the time to help spread sun-safety messages and increase public awareness about skin cancer. The American Academy of Dermatology website includes 18 educational resources to help others learn how to prevent and detect skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. and is also one of the most preventable cancers. The American Academy of Dermatology offers educational resources on skin cancer including resources in Spanish.

The CDC offers information about skin cancer and sun safety in several formats for resources. One format is shareable graphics which you can post on your website or social media. Here are some summary points for sun safety:



- Wear a hat
- Wear protective clothing. Tightly woven, bright, or dark clothing are best at protecting your skin – pastels, bleached cottons and whites let in the most UV radiation.
- Use Broad-spectrum Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher.
- Use extra caution near water and sand. They reflect and intensify sun's damaging rays & increase risk of sunburn.
- Apply 1 ounce (2 tsps.) of sunscreen to entire body 30 minutes before going outdoors; reapply every 2 hours or immediately after swimming or sweating heavily.
- Don't be fooled by a shady day – the sun's harmful UV rays can penetrate through clouds and even a dense fog.
- Seek shade when appropriate, especially important between 10 am and 2 pm, when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Watch Your Shadow! The American Academy of Dermatologists offers a helpful tip to measure your shadow:

National Safety Month:

The National Safety Council will soon have updates to the website for June. Each week has a different focus for safety. As part of the NSC *community safety* it offers seasonal safety information. The Summer Safety Tips offer valuable suggestions for each of these topics:

- Beat the Heat
- Bug Safety
- Playgrounds
- Fireworks
- Water Safety
- Bicycling
- Skateboarding
- Boating
- Pedestrian Safety

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

Worldwide, 50 million people are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. More than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. The Alzheimer's Association is asking people to *go*

purple and raise awareness this June. Purple is the official color of the Alzheimer's movement. View this highly informative educational resource: *Inside the Brain: A tour of how the mind works* which includes two parts: 1. Brain Basics 2. Alzheimer's Effects. On the Alzheimer's Association's website, you can find educational information and information for professionals. You can find support options located near you by selecting the section titled "Local Resources" on the top bar.

ON-LINE EDUCATION AND RESOURCES:

UCC Tuesdays for Nurture Series: **May 11, 2021 3:30 PM in Eastern Time**. Where Do We Go From Here: COVID-19 in 2021. Rev. Traci Blackmon and Nicolette A. Louissaint, PhD, executive director and president of Healthcare Ready: a 501(c)(3) organization that focuses on strengthening the United States' healthcare supply chain preparedness and response before, during and after natural disasters and disease pandemics. Dr. Louissaint will share the current state of the virus and vaccinations nationally, as well as considerations for community re-engagement and long-term recovery post vaccination.

The American Nurses Association has announced an upcoming release of the newly revised Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 4th Edition. **On May 19th**, learn about the changes to this foundational document in the free Nurses Month Webinar, "Redefining Nursing – Reaffirming Our Practice: Introducing the Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 4th Edition".

UCC NEWS:

GENERAL SYNOD 33 UPDATE:

Information is now posted for **General Synod 33 July 11-18, 2021**. **Registration opens shortly; check back for updates**. Proposed resolutions and Proposed UCC Bylaws Amendments are posted for review.

Congratulations to Deborah Ringen, MSN, RN-BC

Minister of Health and Wellness and Faith Community Nurse, Southern New England Conference. Debbie's workshop, *Wellness Ministries: A Foundation for Addressing Health Disparity*, was selected for presentation during General Synod.

KEEP CONNECTED:

Visit our Facebook and Linked-In pages. Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

Editor's Note:
Future issues: Have a wellness ministry example you want to share with colleagues?

Contact me, Alyson Breisch at alyson.breisch@gmail.com.

Wellness Ministries

Health and Wholeness Advocacy - Justice and Local Church Ministries

wellnessministries@ucc.org

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UCC 700 Prospect Ave E Cleveland, Ohio 44115-1100 United States (216) 736-2100